

# The Difficulty of Handling the Music Aspect of Creative Art and Design at the Junior High School in the Kabre South District, Ashanti Region-Ghana

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to identify the difficulty of handling the music aspect of creative art and design at the junior High School in the Kabre South District, Ashanti Region. The research design was a descriptive survey design. The target population were 16 teachers from the junior High School in the Kabre South District, Ashanti Region. The primary instrument for data collection used was an interview. It was found out that the majority of the teachers at the junior high school level have degrees in other subjects other than music and this has affected their teaching of music because they are not specialist teachers. Major challenges teachers encounter when teaching music and dance include lack of teaching implements, negative attitude of teachers towards the subject, and lack of textbooks. It was recommended that there should be a workshop on creative art and design with more attention given to Music and Dance.

**Keywords:** Music and dance, creative art and design, Generalist programme, Specialist programme (GES), Ministry of Education (MoE), National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NaCCA).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, basic music education has seen significant progress, having been placed under Music and Drama in the new curricular hierarchy, and clustered with other disciplines such as Pattern-making and Visual Arts, under the broad tag of Creative Arts—the subject features in the lower primary, Junior High Schools, senior high schools and tertiary institutions. Understanding the great transformation in the Ghanaian curriculum, it is also important to know the creative art components which comprise Music, Dance, Drama, Visual Art and Media Arts. The curriculum designated for the course is well explainable. The situation is now creating awareness for pupils and students to offer music and dance at the basic, secondary and tertiary levels. This exposure has brought enormous benefits to students and pupils who offer music at schools. Students who offer music perform it using a variety of instruments, and styles to be addicted to folk, jazz, hip hop, hip life and so on. It is a prime note that music is not only for its intrinsic value but also to assist children in developing skills and learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Creative arts integration where music facet in the content and methodology uncover the approach of teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form in all subject areas. This integration promotes students engagement in a creative process and thereby connecting other subjects areas of which is music cannot be disregarded. Other disciplines where music plays a vital role include mathematics, science history and many others. Learning mathematics is well known to be very challenging but music can help teach topics like fractions through the use of musical notes and using pitch to teach frequency and ratio. Indeed mathematics and music are related because we use

commonly in both entity. Spelke, E.S. (2008) Science content can use music to teach topics and concepts in science. For instance, teaching weather in science can easily be related to music. In an aspect where teachers asked students to study the weather by singing: rain, rain go away go and come another day, little children want to play, rain, rain go away. In the same vein, music is used to teach of parts of body and to name parts of animals.

Parts of animals through the use of music.

A lion, a lion has a tail

It has a big head

And a very small waist

Human development and activities are more of life stages and faces namely: birth, puberty rite marriage, and death where music plays a predominant role in it. This is supported by Kohler, H. P. (2023) who purported that the life cycle of human beings used music to prepare them mentally, physically and spiritually. Again music and poetry reflect the culture and folklore of a society. This is seen in our national rhythm patriotic song, traditional songs which emerge from epics and heroic poems. Zabuzhanska, I. (2023). Music is an art of expression and communication. Mankind throughout all ages has made music and has used it to express himself when words would not suffice. Music is one of man's common denominators. It unites human beings and brings beauty to life. Music is said to be a universal language. Performing Arts Strand as embedded in the creative art curriculum consists of the following learning areas: Music - Dance Drama. This strand encourages self-expression, brainstorming, imagination, perception, reflective thinking, critical observation, listening, analytical and practical skills and attitudes for composing and performing music, dance and drama. Through this strand, learners further develop their visual literacy by looking at, examining, thinking about and expressing their views and feelings about a wide variety of own and others' compositions and performances produced or found in different cultures and environments in Ghana and other parts of the world. All these are enshrined in the new educational reform with the fact that the new Educational Reforms in Ghana as outlined by the Ghana Education Service (GES), Ministry of Education (MoE), and the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NaCCA) stipulates that the new Educational Reforms covers all levels of Ghana's education system. This was stated clearly that Kindergarten, primary school, JHS and SHS are all described as basic schools. JHS 1, 2,3, and SHS 1 are now referred to as BS 7, 8, 9, and 10 respectively that is SHS 1 shall now be called BS 10. All students in JHS 1 to SHS 1 now run a common core programme called CCP which comprises 9 subjects; namely- Mathematics, Languages, Science, RME (stand-alone subject), Physical and Health Education (not examinable), Career Technology, Social Studies, Computing and Creative Art and Design.

#### Statement of the Problem

Music, as a performing art, requires a performer or group of performers to render a musical score. This is also true for non-classical music: for example, the 'score' might be a lead sheet or only a structured sequence of musical ideas, Choi, S. (2023) this means that the performance plays a major role in how listeners perceive a piece of music: even if the score content is identical for different renditions. This also places a parameter on structure and the basic elements of music as how music teachers can and l in the same basic categories that we use to describe audio effects in general to interpret tempo and timing, dynamics, pitch and timbre. Teachers in Ghanaian primary schools are required to teach music as part of the overall curriculum. Music is one strand of the Creative Arts in which many teachers display a low level of confidence and competence to teach. This trend has been evident in many primary schools and has resulted in a decline in the status of the general school curriculum and its relegation to the periphery of curriculum importance. Yet music is considered to be an important subject that contributes significantly to the child's total development. Primary teachers are prepared for music teaching in primary schools. Many opportunities also exist for broad societal exposure to varied forms of music. Most teachers have the perception that they have limited abilities and content knowledge to teach music and dance. Indeed, adequate knowledge and skills are required of one to be able to provide appropriate and adequate music education for primary school pupils Music: Theme, voice production and diction, harmony and blending of parts, interpretation, the elements and knowledge of music. Zipman, E. (2023) In a situation-specific context such as the teaching of music in early childhood education settings, any concerns that pre-service teachers have about their competence as music educators may eventually result in the implementation of poorly conceptualized and ineffective learning experiences in music that involve little more than a token commitment of effort and time. If people tend to avoid situations they believe exceed their capabilities but undertake activities they judge themselves capable of handling Wolf, K. (2023). This has resulted in many doubts for the research to be conducted

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to identify the difficulty of handling the music aspect of creative art and design at the junior High School in the Kabre South District, Ashanti Region

### Research Questions

#### 1. What is the link between professional qualification and the ability of teachers to teach music?

It can be gleaned from the table that teachers strongly agreed that the negative attitude of pupils towards the subject, lack of facilities, lack of teaching resources or materials and teachers' lack of knowledge on the subject were among the challenges they faced in teaching music. It was revealed that basic teachers at the Afigya Kwabre South obtained their qualification through distance education with a diploma and degree as the main qualification in teaching. Many of these teachers did not specialize in music education. It was seen that they have never learned music before and therefore find it difficult to teach the subject. The subjects that made them obtain qualification were early-grade education and primary education. This also tells that teachers put more emphasis on teaching visual art followed by drama leaving music and dance at the mercy of the pupils to learn on their own. According to some of the teachers: they quoted that; they do not understand the music topics in the creative arts curriculum and therefore need expertise to help them acquire the knowledge before teaching or even not to teach at all.

#### 2. What are the challenges primary school teachers face in teaching music?

The study also revealed that some of the teachers lack the expertise to handle the music aspect in the creative art curriculum because that is not their area of specialization and their background in the subject matter paints a poor picture of lesson delivery. I agree with the teachers as cited in Kwofie, F.D (2023) that if teachers have a strong background in teaching music, it would generally influence their confidence and effectiveness in teaching their subject areas well within their classroom boldly (Graham, C. A. (2023). In addition, when teachers are confident about themselves as teachers of the subject then they would be more confident about teaching the subject as Kohli, A. K. (2023) corroborates. Similarly, Welch (1995) indicated that teachers' self-concept about their skills and background in the subject directly influenced their effectiveness as music teachers and instrumental teachers because the case proved to be different at the basic school.

#### 3. What are the pedagogical approaches used by the teacher in teaching music?

Teaching music comes as a result of knowing your content very well. The creative art design implored various areas in art like visual art, drama, dance and music where teachers are obliged to teach the following aspects of music: the history of a particular dance and how they are performed. Teachers are to use their knowledge gained in music to help pupils learn technical terms like moderato, vivace, crescendo, grave, piano, and mezzo forte in music as well as to explain to pupils how major scales are constructed. It is obvious that teachers hardly understand the concept of music and therefore skip topics when it is performing art in the creative curriculum. Lack of materials is also a hindrance to teaching music because most of the schools need to have a properly set up music studio to help in the teaching of music. Most find it difficult to teach as a result of teachers' guides and books to facilitate the teaching of music. Many music teachers are rethinking how to help pupils acquire skills and experiences to understand the concept of flexibility that will make teachers embrace varied possibilities for expanding their musical knowledge and skills. Teachers need to consider an activity-based approach to perpetuate pedagogical concepts.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was employed by the researcher to achieve the objectives of this study. This research aimed to observe, describe and document parts of a situation as they naturally occur. The researcher reported on already existing conditions. It helps to depict an accurate profile of the situation, event and people. Adjei, E. K. (2023) also postulates that a descriptive survey seeks to provide measurement and report characteristics of the population under study. As observed by Castellan, C. M. (2010) descriptive survey involves the collection of data from members of a group, students, teachers or other persons associated with the educational process. Survey design allowed the researcher to observe the status quo as well as facts rather than manipulate variables (Creswell and Plano, 2006). The design was therefore appropriate for the study since this study was interested in establishing the facts and state of music and dance at the basic school. The main instrument for collecting data was the interview where the letter of permission was given to the District Director of SISO and Headteachers for the research to be conducted. The population for the research was basic school teachers in the

Afigya Kwabre South, Ashanti Region for 22 schools. Each has 13 teachers selectively as visual art teachers. However, the large number of teachers put together would not permit the researcher to deal decisively with finding considering only creative art teachers and therefore selected 10 schools out of the 22 schools because of proximity. Within the schools selected had 2 creative art teachers one for visual art and one for performing art. The reason was that creative art is integrated and therefore needs specialized teachers to handle various aspects and components of the creative arts. This also corresponded with the qualification used in the teaching at the basic level. The table below indicates the list of schools selected.

**Table 1**

NO	School	Creative arts teachers
1	Aduman D/A primary	2
2.	Afrancho D/A Primary	2
3.	Ankaase Methodist Primary	1
4.	Aoagya Anglican Primary	2
5.	Bronkronk D/A Primary	2
6.	Odumakyi D/A Primary	2
7.	Kodie Methodist Primary	2
8.	Wawase R/C Primary	1
9	Mpobi R/C Primary	1
10.	Sasa D/A Primary	1

**Table 2**

NO	SCHOOL	QUALIFICATION	AREA OF SPECIALIZATION
1	Aduman D/A primary	DIPLOMA -2	VISUAL ART
2	Afrancho D/A Primary	DIPLOMA-2	VISUAL ART
3	Ankaase Methodist Primary	DEGREE 1	VISUAL ART
4	Aoagya Anglican Primary	DIPLOMA 2	VISUAL ART
5	Bronkronk D/A Primary	DEGREE 2	VISUAL ART
6	Odumakyi D/A Primary	DIPLOMA 2	VISUAL ART
7	Kodie Methodist Primary	DIPLOMA 2	VISUAL ART
8	Wawase R/C Primary	DIPLOMA 1	VISUAL ART
9	Mpobi R/C Primary	DEGREE 1	VISUAL ART
10	Sasa D/A Primary	DEGREE 1	VISUAL ART

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the table, it was revealed that ten schools consisting of 16 teachers were selected as the target population. The table outlined the number of teachers and their qualifications and this was clearly shown that all the teachers selected from all ten schools 11 were diploma holders and 5 were degree holders. The finding also revealed that all the teachers specialized in mathematics, English language, Science and Ghanaian language but fell short in teaching the content of creative art and design as taught in the basic schools. The reason is that they can only teach visual art, drama and a little dance but cannot teach music as a subject. It is divulged that music topics are strenuous to comprehend. Besides, they don't have the knowledge and the expertise to teach. In the same vein, the subject is looked at as not necessary and not examinable because of that teachers do not study them as subject. Another critical concern was that teachers lack the skills and the confidence to perform the practical test which therefore leads to failure and in limbo teaching music as a subject. A scholar has propounded that music practical performance tests among students should be done with sight-reading from an individual at a much lower skill level than they read as a group (Omaggio, 1993) also cited by Acquah, E. O., & Danso Kwofie, F. (2021). Another way to motivate performers is to identify their favourite artist or preferred style of music by using pictures of artists or icons for students to watch. In addition, Acquah, E. O., & Danso Kwofie, F. (2021) postulated that students should select songs or pieces for performance that are representative of their preferred music from limited or multiple options strategies and methodologies adopted for teaching music practical. Again, Jørgensen, H. (2008) is of the

view that practical music lessons could be done better for students if they choose the repertoire they love. It brings to attention that spending months on learning scores would help one to become perfect. It also indicates that one needs time to learn a wide variety of repertoire every year. Taking advantage of these could help one to find works that inspire him to a new level of intensity. Similarly, it is good to memorize the score for performance in music practical lessons. Just as most martial arts consist of a mix of punches, kicks and throws, music consists largely of scales, chords and arpeggios. Memorizing them gives great confidence when being performed. Lehmann, A. C., & Ericsson, K. A. (1997) indicated that practising technical requirements could help one to perform better and to get a better mark, but gain a better understanding of the building blocks of the pieces they play. Cited by Acquah, E. O., & Danso Kwofie, F. (2021) Music is also an exceptional subject which also requires a lot of practice and adequate preparation before going to teach. It was crystal clear that teachers at the basic schools are not able to teach music because there are no standardized books that have a comprehensive note to cover all three aspects of the creative arts as a result it is difficult to cohort the teaching of music in the classroom. It also revealed that there is a big gap between the pupils and the teachers on how to answer music questions during B.E.C.E. concentration is drawn on drama, not dance and music.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: Public teachers at Afigya Kwabre south in the Ashanti Region have insufficient knowledge on the contents and pedagogies of music and dance in the Afiagya Kwabre South. Teachers' lack of knowledge on the subject, the negative attitude of pupils towards the subject, lack of facilities, and lack of teaching resources or materials are the main challenges faced by teachers in teaching music. Teachers' content knowledge varies significantly among the teachers in the various school.

#### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Regular and well-organized in-service training programmes conducted by the Ghana Education Service will be of great Schools to enhance teachers' mastery of the content and application of different methods and strategies in teaching in music. Sufficient instructional materials and facilities for practical aspects of the subject should be provided in every school. School administrators may have appropriate budget to purchase those instructional materials. Teachers may also consider using mobile applications and musical instruments like Piano and others in teaching music. On the other hand, in order to develop learners' interest towards the subject, programmes that promote music such as school chorale, instrument ensemble and others should be initiated by teachers. Furthermore, teachers should be trained on how to read musical scores and play simple melodic instruments so they will be able to teach songs which are unfamiliar to them. Music should be assigned to teachers with specialization in music. If there is no available teacher with that specialization, it should be given to teachers with background or inclination to music. Generalist teachers in order to continue to teach music should receive appropriate pre-service training in their undergraduate programme.

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